DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 473 996 EC 309 444

AUTHOR	Kafer, Krista
TITLE	Making Good on Promises To Increase Funding for Special Education. The Heritage Foundation Backgrounder.
INSTITUTION	Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	No-1585
PUB DATE	2002-09-10
NOTE	7p.; Produced by the Domestic Policy Studies Department.
AVAILABLE FROM	Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20002-4999. Tel: 202-546-4400; Fax: 703-546-8328; Web site: http://www.heritage.org. For full text: http://www.heritage.org.
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Budgeting; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; *Federal Aid; *Financial Support; Government Role; Outcomes of Education; *Program Effectiveness; *Special Education

ABSTRACT

This paper suggests that Congress could increase funding for special education to the full funding recommended in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by transferring funds from ineffective and low-priority programs in the labor, health, and education appropriations legislation. More than 30 programs are specifically listed as ones that should be ended either because they have not proven to be effective or because they duplicate other programs that already receive federal funds. Charts show: (1) total federal spending on K-12 education from 1965 through 2001; and (2) the rapid rise of education spending compared to the virtually stagnant reading achievement scores among high school students. The paper particularly criticizes the Education Finance Incentive Program. The House of Representatives is also urged to resist adding pork-barrel projects to fiscal year 2003 spending bills. The paper concludes that members of Congress often give lip service to their desire to increase funding for special education, yet Congress continues to use limited education funds for less important programs and projects. (Contains 13 references.) (DB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 473 996

Making Good on Promises to Increase Funding for Special Education

By
Krista Kafer

September 10, 2002/No. 1585

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Plevа

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2

EC 309444

The Heritage Foundation
Backgrounder
214 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002-4999 • (202) 546-4400 • http://www.heritage.org

No. 1585 September 10, 2002

MAKING GOOD ON PROMISES TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

KRISTA KAFER

Congress could increase funding for special education by billions of dollars by transferring funds from ineffective and low-priority programs in the fiscal year (FY) 2003 labor, health, and education appropriations legislation. By doing so, Congress would contribute far more toward the maximum federal contribution recommended in the original law—40 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure for each child in special education.[1]

If special education is truly a priority for Members of Congress, as they often declare, they should transfer these funds to programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). They will have several opportunities to demonstrate their support for special education during the House committee mark-up, House floor vote, Senate floor vote, and conference.

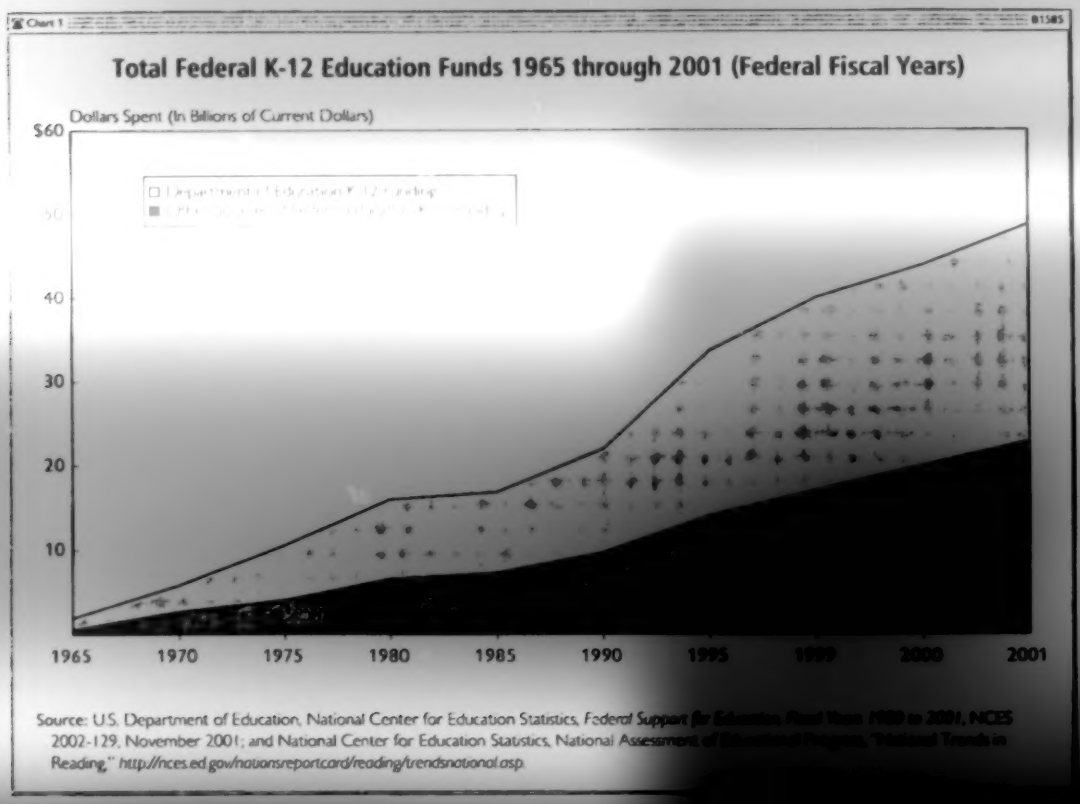
In his budget recommendations, President George W. Bush urged Congress to cut numerous ineffective programs, thereby "stopping the cycle of funding decisions based on wishes rather than on performance information and...ensuring that taxpayer dollars are directed to the activities known to be effective in improving student outcomes."[2] Regrettably, the Senate Appropriations Committee disregarded the President's recommendations in its labor, health, and education appropriations bill (S. 2766) and voted instead to continue funding an array of education programs, many of which have had negligible impact and are based on rationales that are at best questionable.[3]

Produced by the Domestic Policy Studies Department

Published by
[illegible]
(202) 546-4400
http://www.heritage.org

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at: *www.heritage.org/Research/Education/bg1585.cfm*

1. According to Public Law 105–17, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, states may receive up to 40 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States for each child served by special education programs. Many Members of Congress regard the 40 percent limit as a minimum funding threshold to "fully fund" the program. Since 1995, funding for special education has increased 226 percent, bringing the federal contribution to roughly 15 percent.
2. Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2003*, at *http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2003/bud13.html*



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Federal Support for Education, Fiscal Years 1980 to 2001*, NCES 2002-129, November 2001; and National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, "National Trends in Reading," *http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/trendsnational.asp*

Hope now rests with the House of Representatives, which, as it crafts its appropriations legislation, will [illegible] on spe[illegible] $3,54[illegible] must do [illegible]

MAXIMIZING EFFICIENCY THROUGH RESPONSIBLE FUNDING DECISIONS

By following the President's budgetary recommendations, Congress could bolster special education funding by $974,434,000, or the amount allocated by the Senate for these programs. If they went further than the President's budget and transferred funds from other low-priority and duplicative programs, Congress could increase spending [illegible] tribute the largest increase ever appropriated for special education.

In 1975, Congress defined the federal contribution for special education as 40 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure. Until recently, however, actual funding has not exceeded 12 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure. Although federal funding for special education has increased by 224 percent since 1995, the funding level is still nowhere near 40 percent.[5]

3. S. 2766, the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, Appropriations Bill, 2003, sponsored by Senator Tom Harkin (D–IA), was approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 18, 2002.
4. On September 4, 2002, House Appropriations Committee Chairman C W. (Bill) Young (R–FL) introduced H.R. 5320, the House version of the Labor, Health, and Human Services and Education Appropriations Bill.
5. U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, "House Completes Big Week for Special Education," *Education Watch*, March 22, 2002.

NOTE: Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of The Heritage Foundation or as an

Chart 1 shows total federal spending on K–12 education from 1965 through 2001. Total spending over this period grew from $1.94 billion in 1965 to $48.71 billion in 2001, which is an increase of $46.77 billion over 36 years.

Many Members have publicly vowed to increase funding for IDEA. Others have gone so far as to introduce legislation. But when the annual appropriations process concludes, the resulting legislation consistently includes funding increases for new programs, small programs serving special interests, programs known to be ineffective, and pork-barrel projects, while the 40 percent target remains unmet. The commitment to special education has been one of words, not concrete action.

WHAT THE HOUSE SHOULD DO

The first step toward increasing funding for IDEA is to fulfill the President's request to end funding for a wide range of duplicative and ineffective programs, "thus freeing up nearly $1 billion for high-priority activities more likely to yield positive and measurable results."[6] Specifically, funding for the following programs should be ended now:

- Historic Whaling and Trading Partners Exchange Program,
- [illegible] Communities,
- [illegible] Program to Avoid Heart Disease,
- [illegible] Program,
- [illegible] Educational Equity Act,
- [illegible]-to-Teach Television,
- Star Schools,
- Gifted and Talented,
- Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers to Use Technology,
- Dropout Prevention,
- Civic Education,
- School Counseling,
- Close-Up Fellowships,
- National Writing Project,
- Rural Education,
- Foreign Language Assistance,
- Community Technology Centers,
- Arts in Education,
- Parental Information and Resource Centers,
- Community Service for Expelled or Suspended Students,
- Alcohol Abuse Reduction,
- Mentoring,
- Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration,
- A new $100,000,000 program to assist struggling schools,
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and
- Principal Recruitment.

A number of these programs have not proven to be effective, and many duplicate other programs that already receive federal funds. For example, funding for struggling schools, mentoring, alcohol abuse, and computer technology is available under other Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs.

Chart 2 shows the rapid rise in per-pupil education spending (on an [illegible] that makes 1970 equal 1[illegible]) [illegible] reading [illegible] dents ([illegible] 1970).

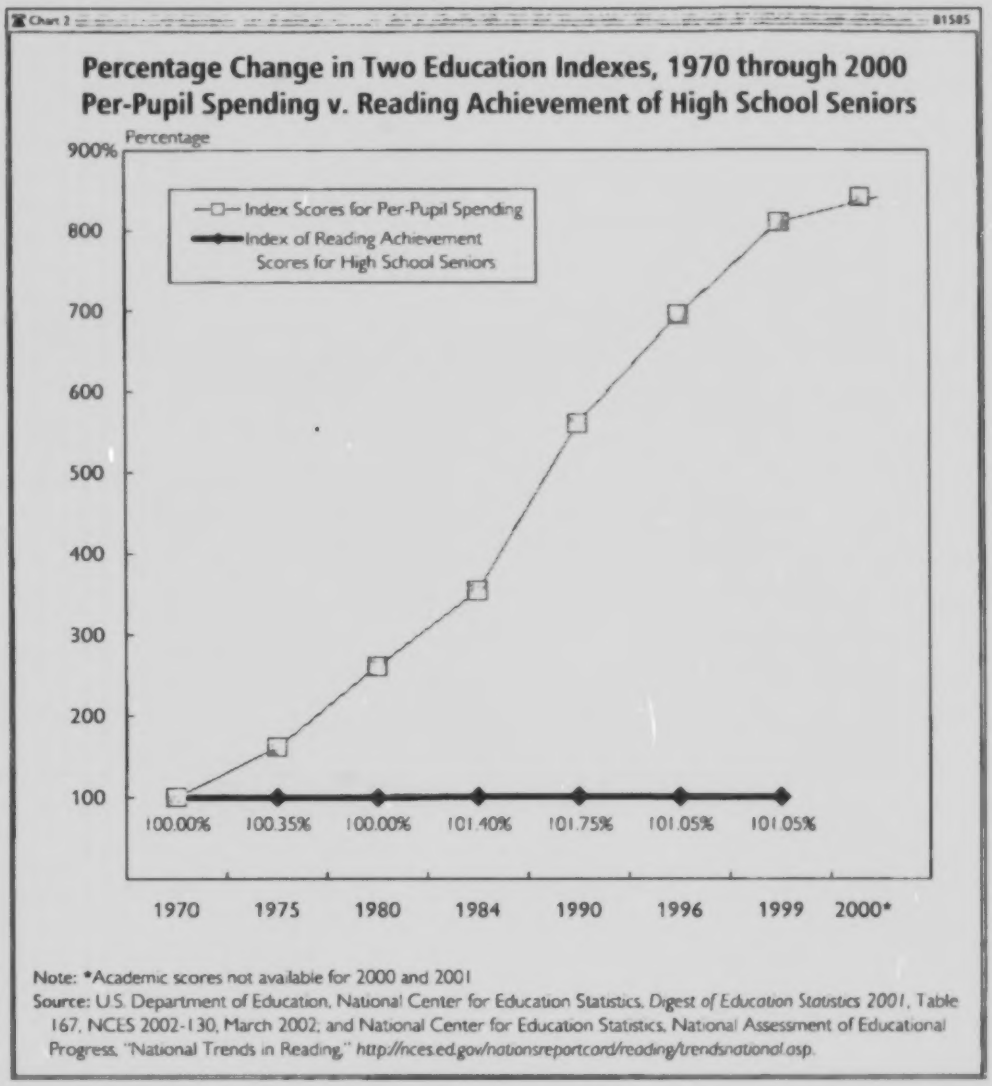
Other [illegible] ing—for [illegible] sional Teach[illegible] study showed that National [illegible] teachers had on average no more impact on student achievement than their non-certified peers.[7] This study is but one of many demonstrating no connection between teacher certification and student achievement.[8]

The Women's Educational Equity Act aims to help girls gain an equitable education, despite the fact that it is boys who have fallen behind girls with regard to an array of academic indicators, ranging from test scores and honors awards to high school and college graduation rates.[9] Still other programs,

6. *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2003.*
7. J. E. Stone, ed., "The Value-Added Achievement Gains of NBPTS-Certified Teachers in Tennessee: A Brief Report," East Tennessee State University, College of Education, May 1, 2002.
8. Kate Walsh, "Teacher Certification Reconsidered: Stumbling for Quality," Abell Foundation, 2001.

such as the Historic Whaling and Trading Partners Exchange Program, are clearly designed to cater to the needs of special-interest groups.

In fact, the House should go further than the President's specific program recommendations and identify additional duplicative or less-needed programs, such as Ready-to-Learn Television, Education for Native Hawaiians, Alaskan Native Education Equity, Improving Literacy Through School Libraries, and Teaching of Traditional American History programs. Funds from programs that researchers have found to be unproven or ineffective—such as the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration, Even Start, Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Educational Technology State Grants—should be transferred to effective programs.[10]



One prospective source of funding is the Education Finance Incentive Program, which provides grants to states that, in Washington's view, have superior education financing systems. Funds from this program—which clearly violates the principle

9. Krista Kafer, "Wasting Education Dollars: The Women's Educational Equity Act," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1490, October 11, 2001, at *http://www.heritage.org/Research/Education/BG1490.cfm*.

10. See *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2001*; David Skinner, "Computers Don't Help," *Public Interest*, No. 147 (Spring 2002); Austan Goolsbee and Jonathan Gurvan, "The Impact of Internet Subsidies in Public Schools," National Bureau of Economic Research, August 2002; and Jeffrey Mirel, "The Evolution of the New American Schools: From Revolution to Mainstream," Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, October 2001.

of local control and goes against the principle of rewarding achievement, which was embodied in the No Child Left Behind Act[11]—could easily be transferred and re-targeted to more constructive purposes.

In effect, the Education Finance Incentive Program penalizes efficiency. States with high achievement and low expenditures—those that get more for their dollars—would not be eligible for these grants because they have not spent as much as other states on education. National studies that compared states' spending levels and the academic achievement of their students have clearly demonstrated that there is no link between greater spending and achievement.[12] By simply transferring funds from these other programs, Congress could increase spending on special education by an additional $3,540,516,000.

In addition to eliminating ineffective programs, the House should resist adding pork-barrel projects. The FY 2002 spending bill contained "earmarked" funding for more than 750 projects, including a program to study the impact of vitamins and school performance; a "Rockin' the Schools" music education program at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum; training for combating "Goth Culture"; and funds to produce a documentary television series.[13] At a time of budgetary restraint, funding channeled to such programs demonstrates a lack of commitment to national priorities.

CONCLUSION

Members of Congress often give lip service to their desire to increase funding for special education, yet in legislative decisions, Congress continues to siphon off limited education funds and use them for programs and projects that are of far less import. In presenting his budget recommendations, President Bush pointed out that

> Congress has, over the years, created hundreds of programs supporting education without asking whether the programs produce results or knowing their impact on local needs. Having spent hundreds of billions over the past two decades, the nation has fallen short in meeting our goal of educational excellence. Clearly change is needed.

Through responsible budgeting, Congress could take up this challenge: It could bolster special education spending by billions of dollars and come closer to fulfilling its promise to fund the maximum 40 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure for each child in special education.

—Krista Kafer is Senior Policy Analyst for Education at The Heritage Foundation.

11. Recent research has called into question all Title I programs. See Marvin H. Kosters and Brent D. Mast, "Can Federal Subsidies Improve Achievement in Poor Schools? An Evaluation of Title I," American Enterprise Institute, April 2002.
12. Kirk A. Johnson, Ph.D., and Krista Kafer, "Why More Money Will Not Solve America's Education Crisis," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1448, June 11, 2001.
13. Eric Robelen, "Spending Plan for 2002 Laden with 'Earmarks'," *Education Week*, January 30, 2002, pp. 23, 27.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS

☑ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket) form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☐ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").